

FOREWORD

FROM TIMOTHY M. KAINE

GOVERNOR, COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

On April 16, 2007, a tragic chapter was added to Virginia's history when a disturbed young man at Virginia Tech took the lives of 32 students and faculty, wounded many others, and killed himself. In the midst of unspeakable grief, the Virginia Tech community stood together, with tremendous support from friends in all corners of the world, and made us proud to be Virginians.

Over time, the tragedy has been felt by all it touched, most deeply by the families of those who were killed and by the wounded survivors and their families. The impact has been felt as well by those who witnessed or responded to the shooting, the broad Virginia Tech community, and those who are near to Blacksburg geographically or in spirit.

In the days immediately after the shooting, I knew it was critical to seek answers to the many questions that would arise from the tragedy. I also felt that the questions should be addressed by people who possessed both the expertise and autonomy necessary to do a comprehensive review. Accordingly, I announced on April 19 the formation of the Virginia Tech Review Panel to perform a review independent of the Commonwealth's own efforts to respond to the terrible events of April 16. The Panel members readily agreed to devote time, expertise, and emotional energy to this difficult task.

Those who agreed to serve were:

- Panel Chair Col. Gerald Massengill, a retired Virginia State Police Superintendent who led the Commonwealth's law enforcement response to the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon and the sniper attacks that affected the Commonwealth in 2002.
- Panel Vice Chair Dr. Marcus L. Martin, Professor of Emergency Medicine, Assistant Dean of the School of Medicine and Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity at the University of Virginia.
- Gordon Davies, former Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1977-1997) and President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (1998-2002).
- Dr. Roger L. Depue, a 20-year veteran of the FBI and the founder, past president and CEO of The Academy Group, Inc., a forensic behavioral sciences services company providing consultation, research, and investigation of aberrant and violent behavioral problems.

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- Carroll Ann Ellis, MS, Director of the Fairfax County Police Department's Victim Services Division, a faculty member at the National Victim Academy, and a member of the American Society of Victimology.
- The Honorable Tom Ridge, former Governor of Pennsylvania (1995–2001) and Member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1983–1995) who was also the first U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security (2003–2005).
- Dr. Aradhana A. "Bela" Sood, Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Medical Director of the Virginia Treatment Center for Children at VCU Medical Center.
- The Honorable Diane Strickland, former judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit Court in Roanoke County (1989–2003) and co-chair of the Boyd-Graves Conference on issues surrounding involuntary mental commitment.

These nationally recognized individuals brought expertise in many areas, including law enforcement, security, governmental management, mental health, emergency care, victims' services, the Virginia court system, and higher education.

An assignment of this importance required expert technical assistance and this was provided by TriData, a division of System Planning Corporation. TriData has worked on numerous reports following disasters and tragedies, including a report on the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School. Phil Schaenman and Hollis Stambaugh led the TriData team.

The Panel also needed wise and dedicated legal counsel and that counsel was provided on a pro bono basis by the Washington, D.C., office of the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, L.L.P. The Skadden Arps team was led by partners Richard Brusca and Amy Sabrin.

The level of personal commitment by the Panel members, staff and counsel throughout the process was extraordinary. This report is the product of intense work and deliberation and the Commonwealth stands indebted to all who worked on it.

The magnitude of the losses suffered by victims and their families, the Virginia Tech community, and our Commonwealth is immeasurable. We have lost people of great character and intelligence who came to Virginia Tech from around our state, our nation and the world. While we can never know the full extent of the contributions they would have made had their lives not been cut short, we can say with confidence that they had already given much of themselves toward advancing knowledge and helping others.

We must now challenge ourselves to study this report carefully and make changes that will reduce the risk of future violence on our campuses. If we act in that way, we will honor the lives and sacrifices of all who suffered on that terrible day and advance the notion of service that is Virginia Tech's fundamental mission.